REMARKS

When last examined, claims 1-21, 24-26 and 33-41 were in the application. All of those claims stand rejected on various grounds. After the entry of the numbers of the claims as requested above, the current claims at issue are: Claims 1-8, 10-18, 20-21, 24-26 and 33-41. For the reasons set forth below, Applicants respectfully request that the claims be allowed and the case passed to issue.

Claims 9, 13-15, and 17-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112 second paragraph. In response to this rejection, Applicants have cancelled claims 9 and 19 and have amended claims 13-15, and 17-18 and 20. In light of the amendments to the claims, the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112 second paragraph has been overcome.

In the last Office Action, in paragraph 8 "Response to Arguments," the Examiner gives a reason for why the claims are obvious in view of the prior art. This reason is based on a definition of a circuit-switched channel that is confusing to a skilled person. From a technical point of view, a circuit-switched channel is a communication resource dedicated to two parties. This is clearly evident from any literature and article about communication. "A circuit-switched channel were set up between the partiers" is a common phrase. To the contrary the Examiner refers to the whole uplink or downlink as a circuit-switched channel. In fact, when the communication system involves circuit-switched channels (other types of channels are of course possible, but not relevant for this application) an uplink as well as the downlink is a communication resource consisting of a plurality of circuit-switched channels, which are each used by a different pair of parties. Each such channel uses an individual communication frequency.

According to claim 1 the invention relates to a method for allocating time slots to channels in a TDM network. A recurrent frame is divided into time slots, and each circuit-switched channel is allocated some of them. Thus, each circuit-switched channel consists of a set of time slots. A request for (more) time slots is made when a need thereof occurs. If no free time slots are available priority levels are used to decide whether time slots already used by a channel can be deallocated from that channel and allocated to another channel. The channel loosing time slots can of course then request more time slots, which may then be achieved from yet another channel. Thus, as a result, time slots are provided where they are most needed.

LAW OFFICES OF
MacPherson, Kwok, Chen &
Heid LLP

1762 Technology Drive
Suite 226
San Jose, CA 95110
(408)-392-9520
FAX (408)-392-9262

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As previously stated Clanton does not disclose allocation of slots, based on priority, to a channel, which can then be used (in recurrent frames) until they are deallocated, but rather discloses handling of one time slot at a time, where the user has to check for each frame if the slot is still available. Priority levels are used for temporarily lending the time slot to a channel with higher priority. When no longer needed the time slot is given back.

In Chan access is given to an already free channel. A request is sent for assignment of a channel. The network checks if there is a free channel (column 1, last line and column 2 first line) and, if so, responds with an identification of the channel and when it will be available. There is no priority handling.

These prior art documents, if combinable, do not disclose the invention as defined in claim 1, or as defined in any other one of the main claims. As indicated above several features are missing. A skilled person would not arrive at the inventive solution on basis of these prior art solutions.

Should the definition of a circuit-switched channel for some reason still be considered to involve the whole uplink/downlink of Clanton, the reasoning of paragraph 4 of the Office Action is contradictory. The allocation of time slots 0-7 to the downlink channel involves 8 different users having a time slot each, all in different communication frequencies. Then "associating the allocated set of time slots to said first channel with a first level of priority" does not happen in Clanton, since each time slot individually is associated with a priority. Furthermore, in Clanton an established channel that needs more time slots would have to "borrow" them from another frequency, which is not possible. In accordance with the invention the allocation process takes place within a frame, which is carried on one frequency.

The above arguments are also applicable to the rejection of claim 24 and the claims dependent therefrom. Accordingly, those claims are also now in condition for allowance.

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CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections be withdrawn and the claims allowed. Should any other action be contemplated by the Examiner, it is respectfully requested that he contacts the undersigned at (408) 392-9250 to discuss the application.

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Respectfully submitted,

David W. Heid
Attorney for Applicants
Reg. No. 25,875